Module 6
Phase I of the Planning Process

Objectives

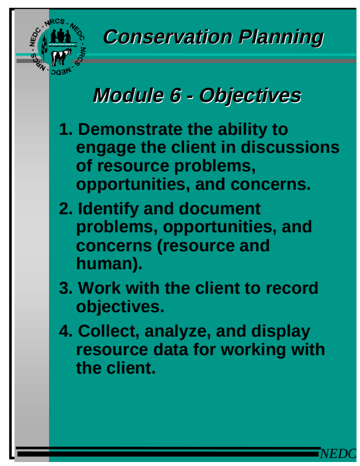
At the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to engage the client in discussions of resource problems, opportunities, and concerns.

2. Identify and document problems, opportunities, and concerns (resource and human).

3. Work with the client to record objectives.

4. Collect, analyze, and display resource data for working with the client.



Training Aids

Two Flip Charts

Overhead Projector

Method of Instruction

Presentation, Discussion, and Field Exercise

Total Time

16 Hours

Module 6—Table of Contents
Phase I of the Planning Process

Part 1—Classroom

Module 6—Table of Contents (cont.)
Phase I of the Planning Process

Module 6—Table of Contents (cont.)
Phase I of the Planning Process

Part 3—Field Exercise—Field Portion

Module 6—Phase I of the Planning Process (Classroom and Field)

Instructor Note

***Classroom*—approximately 1.25 hours**

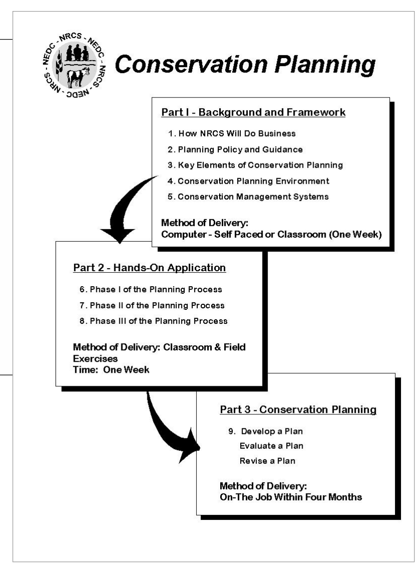
The following is a suggested list of key items to cover, briefly, in the classroom, in regard to phase I of the planning process.

States can tailor this list to meet their specific needs and are encouraged to develop site specific examples to illustrate the key points.

I. Introduction and Overview

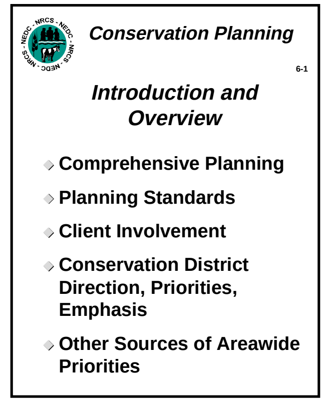
Instructor Note and Module 'Flow Chart' Overhead

Display the overhead of the course module flow chart to track the progression of the course.



A. Why is it important to do a comprehensive job of planning?

Overhead #6-1



- A comprehensive effort is necessary to effectively meet the needs of the resources, the client, and the agency.
- A comprehensive effort sets a solid foundation for implementation, or for continuation of the planning process, as appropriate, to plan the entire unit or to reach an RMS level.
- Whether the planning effort is for a field, a tract, a conservation management unit, or the entire unit, the planning steps and the level of planning intensity should be the same. The planner should always help guide the process toward meeting the planning standards and obtaining an RMS.

B. Planning standards

- What are they?

  Planning standards identify the degree that each step in the planning process must be carried out. They indicate the condition expected to exist at the successful completion of each planning step.

- Why have a standard?

  To establish a level of achievement and consistency to attain for each planning step.

- Where are they found?

  In the NPPH narrative for each planning step (600.21 - 600.29)

C. Keep the client involved in the planning process. Remember it is the client who:

- Provides input and feedback.
- Helps the planner learn.
- Develops the plan.
- Is the decisionmaker.
- Owns the plan.

D. Conservation district direction, priorities, emphasis

- Where is this information found?
  - State conservation district enabling legislation and other state laws
  - Conservation district long range and annual plans
  - Conservation district policies and operating procedures
  - Cooperative Working Agreements
  - Watershed and other plans where the district is the sponsor
  - Other agreements and memorandums of understanding
- How does this information help the planning process?

  Sets the direction for conservation planning in the district.

E. Other sources of areawide priorities

- RC&D Council plans of work
- Other areawide plans

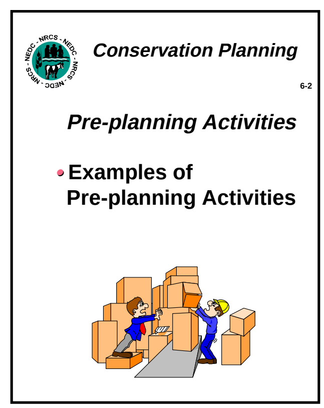
II. Pre-planning Activities

A. Pre-planning activities can include a number of items.

Question

What are some examples?

Overhead #6-2



- Identify the principal client or clients (owners, managers, leasees, etc.).
- Identify the planning unit boundaries.
- Review the client's file, if one exists.
- Determine if a conservation plan or conservation contract exists, or has existed, for the unit and review that material.
- Assemble land use and soils maps.
- Identify and review other planning efforts completed or underway that may affect this unit - areawide conservation plan, PL-566, FPMS, RB Study, RC&D, etc.
- Assemble and review soil survey information.

- Review MLRA information.
- Review any resource information developed for this area.
- Review other information available, such as the water quality indicators guide, utility maps, HEL designations, wetlands inventory, etc.
- Identify any tools or supplies needed.

III. Phase I of the Planning Process

A. Phase I of the planning process.....

Overhead #6-3

- Is the collection and analysis of SWAPAH information.
- Moves the client and planner to a position of knowledge.

B. Phase I consists of the first four planning steps

1. Identify Problems
2. Determine Objectives
3. Inventory Resources
4. Analyze Resource Data

The planning process may start with any of the first three steps, or step 9.

For example, the planning process may start with:

Step 1—Identify Problems

- The client requests help with a problem.
- The client has expressed a concern.
- The client has identified an opportunity.
- A problem is identified by a party other than the client and a contact is made with the client, i.e., problems that require actions by individual clients that are identified in an areawide conservation plan.

Step 2—Determine Objectives

- The client is considering or has developed specific goals or objectives.
- The client wants to modify a crop rotation or grazing plan.
- The client wants to irrigate a certain field.
- The client wants to respond to an areawide conservation plan.

Step 3—Inventory Resources

- The client wants to know the identity of a new plant that is invading his pasture and how to control it.

- The client wants to know if there are any wetlands on his farm.

Step 9—Evaluate Plan

- The client inquires if his current management system will meet certain USDA program requirements. This could lead to a revision of an existing plan or development of a new plan.

- The client wants to know his current level of irrigation efficiency and if it can be improved to save pumping costs. Again, this could lead to revision of an existing plan or development of a new conservation plan based on the results of the irrigation evaluation.

C. NPPH Sample Checklist of Resource Problems or Conditions

- What is it?

  A national list of potential SWAPAH problems or conditions.

- Why have one?

  It provides the planner with a reminder list of items that may need to be considered.

- Can it be tailored to state or local conditions?

  Yes. As a minimum, tailor it to meet state needs. Tailoring it further to meet local needs is even better.

- How can it be used?

  Use it as a reminder of items to consider and address during the planning process, i.e., to “train your mind” as to what to look for when you work with the client.

  In time the items on the list should become common elements for us to think about as we do conservation planning.

  It is not necessary to fill out the form with the client. It’s not meant for that purpose.

- Does the entire checklist need to be completed?

  No, just the portions applicable to the unit being planned, and to the extent that information is available or can be obtained.

- Should a completed checklist be included in the finished plan?

  Only the information that was found to be relevant to the plan should be included.

D. Determine if the planning effort will result in:

- Planning the entire unit or part of the unit.
- Planning to an RMS level or progressive planning toward an RMS.

E. If the client’s interest is to plan part of the unit or to plan at a level below an RMS, help the client look at the bigger picture to....

- Consider the effects, impacts, and interactions on the client’s entire unit.
- Consider off-site influences, effects, and impacts on the planning unit and vice versa.

- Avoid creating new problems as current problems are addressed.
- Convey the importance of planning to a level of sustainability.
- Show the interactions that occur within and between planning units.

F. Inventories

Question

How do you determine what needs to be inventoried?

- Consider:
  - The initial problems, opportunities, and concerns identified by the client
  - The client's objectives
  - Resource area data
  - Observations by the planner and the client
  - Professional judgement
  - Program requirements
  - Legal requirements
  - Common sense
  - The findings from the inventory process, as that process unfolds
- How to conduct the inventory
  - Utilize the procedures and guidance found in discipline handbooks and manuals.

Question

How do you involve the client in the inventory?

- Invite the client along
- Ask questions
- Involve the client with clippings, measurements, calculations, etc.
- Texture and identify the soil with the client
- Schedule the time for the inventory when the client is available

• Resource Area information already developed

- Review the information that has been developed.
- Make sure the information is still current and of high quality.
- This information benefits the planning process by providing general benchmark information for the area where the planning unit is located.

• How much inventory information should be collected? Inventory sufficiently to:

- Determine the current status of the resource, economic, and social conditions (benchmark condition).
- Understand the cause and effects of problems.
- Provide the client with enough information to make informed decisions.
- Determine the influence or effects from off-site areas.

G. Complete an analysis of the inventory data to

- Compare the effects of the benchmark system with established quality criteria to determine which resource conditions do not meet quality criteria.
- Compare the effects of the benchmark system with the client's objectives to determine if the client's objectives are being met.
- Determine what changes need to be made to meet quality criteria and the client's objectives.
- Determine if the client's objectives will maintain or improve the resources if the system is presently at a sustainable level or above.
- Compare the effects of the benchmark system with the objectives in any areawide conservation plan.

H. Display the inventory analysis in terms the client can readily understand and use.

Utilize

- Discipline handbooks and manuals for guidance and examples.
- Worksheets
- Graphics
- Photos
- Drawings
- Tables
- etc., as appropriate

IV. Products of Phase I

Question

What are the key products expected from Phase I of the planning process?

Overhead #6-4

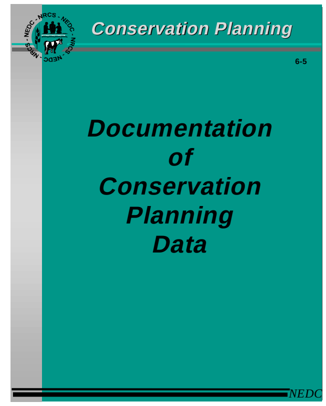
- Identification and documentation of problems, opportunities, and concerns.
- A list of the client's objectives.
- Inventories of the resources and the human considerations.
- A complete analysis of the inventory information.
- Documentation of the benchmark condition of the planning unit and related areas.
- Environmental evaluation.
- Cultural resources evaluation.

Remember that these products are a result of the work that is done in the field with the client.

V. Documentation of Conservation Planning Data

Overhead #6-5

A. What to document in hard copy or electronic format:



- Client information
    - Client name, address, etc.
    - Types of enterprises, etc.
    - Identify the owners and operators of the land
- Assistance notes
    - Technical, historical, etc.
- Resource inventory data
    - Land unit information
    - Constraints
    - Determinations
    - Soils
    - Describe location
        - Cooperator info, hydrologic units, congressional district, etc.
- Benchmark information
    - Check for old plan data

Field Exercise—Classroom Portion

Instructor Note

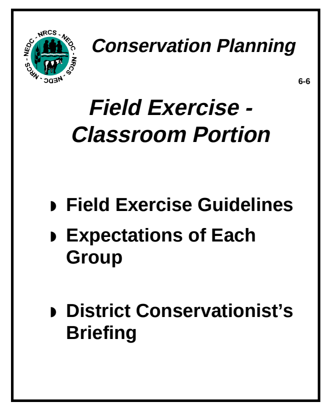
This is an <u>example</u> of how the field exercise could be set up and conducted.

<u>States can tailor the field exercise, both the classroom portion and the field portion, to meet their specific needs</u>.

Field Exercise - <u>Classroom Portion</u> - approximately .75 hours

Overhead #6-6

Discuss how the field exercise is organized and will operate:



Field Exercise Guidelines

- The field exercise should be conducted on a working farm or ranch.

  Note: The owner should be a cooperator with the district and could have a conservation plan for the property. Information from the plan could be provided to the course participants, i.e., client objectives, problems, opportunities, and inventory data, however, the participants should not be given a copy of the plan.

- The participants are divided into groups of 5-6 people. Each group should contain a diversity of experience and disciplines.

- Each group is assigned a group leader.

- The group leaders stay with their group throughout the planning process.

- The farm or ranch should contain at least as many distinct land uses as there are groups of course participants.

- An instructor is assigned to each land use and should stay on that site / land use as the groups rotate from site to site / land use to land use. The instructors should serve as the substitute client for their respective land use.

- Each land use needs to be about equal in the effort needed for inventory so that group rotation will flow smoothly (about the same time requirements for each land use).

- Each group should first assemble with the instructor, for discussion purposes, whenever visiting a site / land use for the first time.

Expectations of Each Group

- All participants are actively involved.

- Complete planning steps 1 - 4, for the farm or ranch, as a group.

- Determine the benchmark conditions and effects.

- Record initial information on the SSPEW.

Roles of the instructors, group leaders, and group members.

- The instructors provide the classroom instruction and the instruction in the field relative to their particular site and land use on the farm/ranch. The instructors also serve as the substitute client, for their respective land use, for the field exercise, to answer questions and provide information to the groups as needed or requested.

- The group leaders help guide their assigned group through the planning process and help facilitate the teaching and learning experience. The group leader should strive to involve all participants in the activities and discussions.

- The group members carry out the planning process, as a group, on this unit. Members share their own planning experience and knowledge with the rest of the group. Members should lead the group through the resource inventory and analysis for their discipline, i.e., range conservationist / range inventory and forage balance.

District Conservationist Briefing

Before going to the field the local district conservationist should provide a briefing, in the classroom, at this time, on the local area in relation to the community, resource area, conservation planning environment, issues, concerns, resources, etc. This is to include a brief review of the farm/ranch unit to be planned, such as the nature of the request for assistance (EQIP request, for instance), the type and size of the unit, background information on the farm family, and the relationship of the farm/ranch to the larger area.

Instructor Note

Discuss and complete preplanning activities.

Field Exercise—Field Portion
(Approximately 14 hours)

Farm/Ranch Setting

Overhead #6-7

Conduct a field reconnaissance of the area / community around the planning unit. This can be accomplished during the trip from the classroom to the property being used for the field exercise. Each group should travel in a different vehicle, with an instructor and their group leader, for better discussion opportunities. The instructor should expand on the description of the local area and the conservation planning environment that was covered in the classroom by the DC, from an on-the-ground perspective, since the group will be seeing and experiencing the area firsthand for the first time. This discussion should include any community issues that might influence the conservation planning effort. To the extent possible, include a drive-by initial observation of the farm/ranch unit to be planned.

Meet the Client

The entire class should meet the client at a designated spot and receive an overview of the unit from the client - operation, ownership, type of business, size of the unit, history of the unit, and the problems, opportunities, concerns and objectives identified by the client. This should include ecological, economic and social perspectives.

Instructor Note

The instructors should work with the client ahead of time to help craft what needs to be covered by the client and what needs to not be said unless the participants ask questions to draw out that information. In other words, don't give the participants all of the information up front - make them think and work for it.

Client Interview

The participants will have an opportunity to have an open discussion with the client and ask questions.

Instructor Note

The instructors need to be prepared to guide the students as they learn how to interview a client. The H. B. Passey paper may be very valuable at this point for the instructors.

The instructors need to guide the participants in asking questions, i.e., "John, don't you think you might need to know .... Why don't you ask Mr. Client a question that elicits that information." The client needs to know that he is helping our staff interview a client.

Group Activities

Each group should meet separately to discuss and document the initial problems, opportunities, objectives, business information, etc.

Each group should then, independently, conduct a physical inventory of the resources on the planning unit. This includes gathering appropriate off-site information.

Instructor Note

The instructors should each stay on the site they are handling and cover appropriate material relative to Phase I of the planning process as the groups rotate, one at a time, to each site / land use. One instructor should handle cropland, another rangeland, etc. There needs to be at least as many sites / land uses as there are groups rotating. See the following example of how this could be organized.

Example:

Group	Site Rotation	Group Leader
A	1,2,3,4,5,6	(name)
B	2,3,4,5,6,1	(name)
C	3,4,5,6,1,2	(name)
D	4,5,6,1,2,3	(name)
E	5,6,1,2,3,4	(name)

Sites	Land Use	Fields	Instructor / Substitute Client
1	Cropland	1, 4, 8	(name 1)
2	Hayland	7, 10	(name 2)
3	Pastureland	2, 3, 11	(name 3)
4	Rangeland	5, 6	(name 4)
5	Woodland	9	(name 5)
6	Headquarters	12	(name 6)

The group leader rotates with the group from site to site to provide guidance and support as the group inventories the farm/ranch.

The instructors cover their materials at each site first and then the group conducts the inventory of the resources in those fields associated with that land use. The instructors also need to be available to the group as the substitute client to answer questions, etc.

Items for the instructor to cover:

Cropland

- Crop rotation
- Yields
- Nutrient management
- Soil testing information
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Hayland

- Establishment date
- Yields
- Nutrient management
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Pastureland

- Establishment date
- Grazing system used
- Forage production
- Forage demand
- Nutrient management
- Wildlife habitat
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Rangeland

- Grazing system used
- Condition and trend
- Forage production
- Forage demand
- Productivity
- Wildlife habitat
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Woodland

- Nutrient management
- Wildlife habitat
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Headquarters

- Water supply
- Livestock waste management
- Quality criteria
- Planning considerations

Note: Threatened and Endangered Species, Cultural Resources, and Wetlands may fit into discussions of each of the landuses listed above.

Conduct Inventories

Each group conducts the needed inventories on the entire farm/ranch by rotating from site to site, field to field, across the unit. Conduct appropriate inventories relative to the unit in terms of the initially identified problems and opportunities, the client's stated objectives, and other appropriate factors.

Instructor Note

States should preview the planning unit well in advance, determine what inventories will likely be needed, and have the appropriate tools and worksheets available (field exercise notebook) for the participants to use. For those inventories that may be too time consuming to do during the course, the instructors may complete part of the inventory work prior to the course and supply that information to the groups as they rotate to their site.

Instructor Note

Instructors need to be prepared to "guide" the participants to understand which inventories are really needed. This can probably best be done by keeping the participants focused on observed resource problems and the client's objectives.

Resource Inventory Considerations:

Soil

Erosion

Condition

Deposition

Water

Quantity

Quality

Air

Quality

Condition

Plants

Suitability

Condition

Management

Animals

Habitat

Management

<u>Economic Inventory Data:</u>

Family Farm

Land

Labor

Capital

Management

Other

<u>Social Inventory Data:</u>

Farm Family

Cultural Resources

Client Characteristics

Community Characteristics

Analyze Data

Each group then completes an analysis of the inventory data for all fields, establishing:

- A complete analysis of all resources inventoried.
- Benchmark conditions and effects on the planning unit.
- Off-site effects / damages.
- Identification of the causes of the problems.

Each group also completes, for all fields:

- An environmental evaluation.
- A cultural resources evaluation.
- Initial entries on the SSPEW.

Discussion With the Client

The substitute client from this point on for each group is as follows:

Group	Instructor / Substitute Client
A	(name 1)
B	(name 2)
C	(name 3)
D	(name 4)
E	(name 5)

Each group confers with their substitute client (as listed above) for all fields / CMUs on the results of the resource inventory and analysis, and makes adjustments to the resource problems and opportunities initially identified. The objectives are reviewed with the substitute client and modified per the desires of the substitute client.

Wrap-Up

The instructor / substitute client and the group leader works with each group to determine if the planning standards for the first four planning steps have been met.